

## Global Affairs Student Selected for Truman Scholarship

By Aisba Jamil



Each year, the Truman Scholarship Foundation provides up to \$30,000 in funding to students who plan to pursue graduate degrees in public service fields. This year, Mason undergraduate Alexandra Tyson has been selected as a scholarship recipient.

Tyson, a junior majoring in global affairs and government and international politics, was one of the 602 applicants who submitted applications for the scholarship; generally about 65 are selected.

Tyson is the fourth-ever Mason student to win a Truman Scholarship.

"I'm thrilled and absolutely floored," says Tyson. "I've finally stopped crying and am now trying to let it sink in. It's weird. If you had told me when I was a freshman that this was going to happen, I would have laughed in disbelief."

In addition to the funding, the Truman Scholarship Foundation provides scholars assistance with career counseling, internship placement, graduate school admissions, and professional development. Scholars are invited to participate in a number of programs, such as Truman Scholar Leadership Week, the Summer Institute, and the Truman-Albright Fellows Program.

Born in London, Tyson was exposed to a variety of cultures as a child.

"I was raised by a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, both American, one a diplomat," says Tyson. "When I was four, we moved to the Islamic country of Kuwait."

However, when her brother was diagnosed with a severe learning disability, Tyson's family decided to move to the United States permanently so that he could get treatment.

Moving around so much at such an early age, there was one thing that helped Tyson cope with change: drawing. In fact, Tyson drew so much that her elementary school teacher restricted it and called a parent conference.

"With art, I was always searching for something, whether it was for a way to comment on the area surrounding me or to delve into my head," she says.

She adds: "Funnily enough, my love of design was noticed in the groups I joined at Mason, such as the Environmental Action Group (EAG). I pretty much became the de facto designer as a freshman. However, the content discussion at the EAG's meetings stirred me in a way that made me want to become involved in the environmental movement. My initial passion for design led me to take higher leadership positions and educate myself and my peers about the destructive and insidious nature of issues such as climate change and mountaintop removal."

Shortly after arriving at Mason, Tyson learned about the Truman Scholarship from a university bulletin board flyer. Noting that the scholarship was for juniors only, Tyson tucked the thought of a fellowship into the back of her head.

"Since I have been at Mason," she says, "I have always wanted to work in the public sector, and the Truman Foundation caters to those who aspire to take that route."

At an information session on the scholarship, Tyson met a former Truman scholar who spoke about how the foundation changed her life.

"I was blown away by how authentic the representative was. She had such personality and wasn't afraid to let anyone know it," Tyson says, adding, "I spoke to her afterward and thought to myself, 'Wow. If this is what a Truman scholar is like, then I want to be one.'"

LaNitra Berger, the Fellowship and Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program director who helped Tyson with the application process, knew that Tyson had what it took to win.

"Alex was truly surprised to learn that she was selected as a Truman Scholar, but I was not. I know that she will exceed all of the expectations that the Truman Foundation has of its scholars. Her commitment to environmental sustainability at Mason and the broader community requires a level of compassion, dedication and resolve that I have not seen before in my career. We should all be proud that students like Alex have dedicated their lives to public service."

Tyson plans to pursue a master's in public policy with a concentration in international environmental policy.

Although it has been a long and demanding process, Tyson is hopeful about her future and has some words of wisdom for Mason students who might be interested in applying for the scholarship.

"Don't be afraid to take risks," she says "If you don't like what you are doing now, stop doing it and do what you love. Having passion for what you do is always better than trying to fit a mold you think some random fellowship director wants you to be."



Junior Alexandra Tyson is congratulated by Mason President Alan Merten and other well-wishers on being awarded the Truman Scholarship, which provides up to \$30,000 in funding to students who plan to pursue graduate degrees in public service fields.



Global Affairs

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## Study Abroad

Whether it is for a few weeks, a semester, a summer, or an entire year, we encourage Global Affairs students to study abroad. Learning in other countries enhances the learning experience in immeasurable ways. This year, our students are going to places such as Cambodia to participate in peace-building projects and study sustainability, Switzerland to examine international organizations, and India to explore topics such as colonialism and the evolution of technology.

Students in the Master of Arts in Global Affairs Program are required to take part in one two-week summer seminar abroad

to complete their core requirements. In summer 2010, students traveled to Brussels to study global migration. This summer, students will examine contemporary migration with an emphasis on the East Asian experience, while traveling through China.

Each year, the list of places our students travel gets longer and longer. If you haven't yet signed up for a study-abroad experience, we urge you to do so. If you have questions about studying abroad, be sure to discuss the many options with your advisor.

# Global Affairs

TOMORROW'S GLOBAL CITIZENS

[globalaffairs.gmu.edu](http://globalaffairs.gmu.edu)



## Letter from the Director

This spring, we have watched with a mix of joy and concern, anticipation and anxiety, as people across the Middle East and North Africa have gone into the streets to demand change in their societies. From the peaceful demonstrations in Egypt's Tahrir Square to the violent clashes along the coastal road in Libya, a world region that far too many believed stuck in a permanent state of dictatorship is transforming before our very eyes.

What could be more exciting, more energizing than the study of global affairs at such a time?

As we wrap up one academic year and prepare for another, we celebrate the achievements of our graduating seniors and those completing the MA program. We also are very focused on many new initiatives for our program that, we are quite certain, will substantially improve the already excellent academic experience for our students.

Global Affairs is rapidly becoming one of the leading international academic programs in the United States and the world. With more than 700 undergraduate and 35 MA students, we are already one of the largest, if not the largest, global academic program in the United States. Many of our undergraduate and all our graduate students take part in study-abroad programs, and our alumni are finding better and better jobs each year. Whether they are working in the U.S. embassy in Slovenia, as an analyst in the Department of Homeland Security, or as a staff member at a nongovernmental organization doing development work in Africa, our graduates are proof that a great education with a global focus opens many interesting doors.

In the coming academic year, we will offer honors in the major for the first time—a sure sign of the coming of age of our undergraduate program. Our MA students will take part in a seminar abroad in either Beijing (2011) or Buenos Aires (2012). And throughout the year, we will sponsor or cosponsor many events in what we have dubbed "the year of Africa." Speakers, films, new courses, new internships, and new study-abroad opportunities will all be part of this initiative.

As part of our efforts to improve what we offer our students about Africa, we have applied for major funding from the Department of Education to offer several new courses on North Africa and help the Arabic program move from a minor to a major in Arabic language. In addition, we are cooperating with Mason's School of Management to develop a new degree in global business that will combine the strengths of both programs. At the MA level, we are putting the finishing touches on a dual-degree program with Korea University.

I am also happy to announce that during the 2010–11 academic year, Global Affairs received its first substantial gift—\$2,500 from Board of Visitors member David Ramadan—as well as a number of smaller, but still important, gifts from recent alumni. Because

*Continued on next page*



Global Affairs is now on Facebook. Every week, we post updates to our fan page (Global Affairs at George Mason University). Be sure to "Like" our page, so you can stay abreast of program happenings. Upcoming events, student achievements, possible scholarships, and other department news can all be found there.



Where Innovation Is Tradition

## Internships

In this rapidly globalizing world, Global Affairs students are finding internships in a variety of organizations that help them land jobs after graduation. During the 2010–11 academic year, students interned at embassies (both abroad and domestic), technology consulting companies, the State Department, nonprofit organizations, and others. Visit [globalaffairs.gmu.edu/internship](http://globalaffairs.gmu.edu/internship) to see where Global Affairs students have completed internships.

## Need an Intern?

Do you work at an organization with a global focus that needs interns? Our students benefit from the real-world experiences internships provide. If your organization has space for one of our students, please contact us at [globalma@gmu.edu](mailto:globalma@gmu.edu).

## A Note from a Global Affairs Graduate

### Jason Keller's Personal Internship Information (Global Affairs Graduate, 2010)

Mason's freshman orientation was quite overwhelming. Standing there in the

Johnson Center looking at all the booths with different degree programs. I didn't have a clue what I wanted to major in. But I knew Global Affairs was for me when I saw the eclectic mixture of courses in international relations, economics, conflict analysis, language, security studies, and current affairs, just to name a few. It was sort of like rolling *BBC World News*, the History Channel, and the National Geographic Channel all into one. And it didn't disappoint.

During my last semester of undergraduate work, I decided I needed an internship. I met with Career Services staff members who proved to be extremely helpful. They directed me to PatriotJobWeb (now HireMason), where I found my current internship at the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK). Growing up in Annandale, Virginia, I've always had a special interest in the Korean peninsula. Korean was my language at Mason, I've managed a Korean restaurant, and I've even visited Seoul. HRNK has proved perfect. I research, write, and edit reports on a variety of issues pertaining to human rights in North Korea. These reports are then turned into policy recommendations for the U.S. government, other international governments, nongovernmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations. It has been extremely challenging in the best possible way.

I graduated this past fall with a bachelor of arts in global affairs and am in the process of applying to Global Affairs' master's program. Looks like they can't get rid of me.

### From the Director, continued from page 1

the commonwealth has frozen our budget for several years now, these gifts make a significant difference in our efforts to improve the program each year.

If you are on campus or in Fairfax, be sure to stop in and say hello. If not, join our Facebook group (Global Affairs at George Mason University), or send us an e-mail to say hello.

Mills Kelly  
Director



## Global Affairs Students and Their Stories

### Oriane Boudinot (MA student)

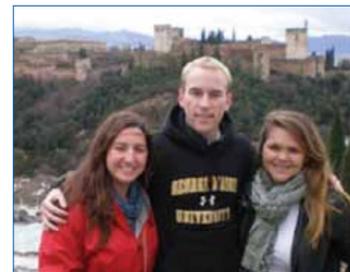
After earning dual bachelor of arts degrees in art history and anthropology from Mason in 2006, Oriane Boudinot decided to focus on international development work. She traveled to Cambodia, where she lived for seven months in the Save the Children Cambodia for Development orphanage located west of the capital, Phnom Penh. On her return to the United States, Boudinot enrolled in Mason's MA in Global Affairs and Certificate in Geographic Information Systems programs. After she finishes her studies in fall 2012, she intends to join the Peace Corps or begin a career with an international organization such as the United Nations, the World Bank, or U.S.AID.

### Lucila Fernandez (BA 2011)

Lucila Fernandez participated in an alternative spring break program in Guatemala through Mason's Center for Leadership and Community Engagement. She is an active member of the Hispanic Student Association and cofounder of the women's club soccer team. In 2010, Fernandez received the Dean's Challenge Award in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

### Shannon Pacheco (MA 2011)

Shannon Pacheco conducted groundbreaking research on child soldiers in West Africa for her capstone research seminar. Her work on child soldiers and how security force assistance missions should deal with them is now being used by the new Translational Research Center at the U.S. Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning. The Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization Program is also using her paper as a supplemental resource to assist Marine officers who have been assigned to Africa after they graduate from Basic School.



### Gleason Rowe (BA 2011)

Gleason Rowe (pictured above, center) spent the fall of his senior year studying in Valencia, Spain. A double major in global affairs and foreign languages, he knew an

immersion experience would be the best way to become fully fluent in his chosen foreign language. While in Spain, Rowe lived with a family that did not speak English, and he took a full course load of advanced classes with local professors as part of his curriculum. When not in class, he had the opportunity to intern in the office of a local attorney and attend several court proceedings. While abroad, he visited Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Turkey, Greece, Ireland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

### Anne Stickney (BA 2011)

Anne Stickney's 11-month study-abroad experience consisted of a direct exchange with the University of Malta in the city of Msida, as well as an intensive French language program in Paris. Stickney describes her time in Malta as the most rewarding experience of her life. Viewing international relations from a small island state compared with the United States allowed Stickney to study global affairs from a whole different perspective. After 10 months in Malta, she participated in the Intensive French Language Program in Paris along with 20 other Mason students, where her French improved significantly and she enjoyed being able to be immersed in another city and culture.

## MA Program Graduates First Students

By Rasbad Mulla

In December 2010, the Global Affairs master's program reached an academic landmark. It graduated its first students: Milan Jocic and Eid Al Darmaki, two men who had vastly different experiences before joining the program in 2009.

Jocic says he had no reservations about signing up for the new program and being part of the first generation of its graduates is an honor. Working for the United States Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, he was already well-versed in international relations through practical experience. As an undergraduate global affairs major at Mason, he developed an excellent rapport with his professors in the classroom and beyond.

"Taking into consideration the benefits Mason provides, I welcomed the opportunity to be a trailblazer when the global affairs advanced degree was initiated," Jocic says. "Working closely with program director Mills Kelly confirmed that being a part of this groundbreaking course of study would be very beneficial to me and my future career endeavors."

Al Darmaki came to the global affairs program as a full-time government employee. He wanted to increase his understanding of the international community to help him succeed in his current job and any similar employment he seeks in the future.

"I wanted a program that would help me better understand global, political, economic, and human systems," Al Darmaki says. "This program has given me an excellent foundation and knowledge that will be useful for my current government job and I hope for future

opportunities in foreign service." Both graduates were impressed with the program's unique innovative course structure.

Jocic says the course work itself was different from that of other master's programs, with class discussions intertwined with current issues. But he found the study-abroad requirement to be the program's hallmark.

"Having conversations and debates with European Union officials is a vital step in professional work environments through a shadowing experience," Jocic says, having traveled to Brussels, Belgium. "Being a part of classroom discussions is important; however, working and studying abroad enhances our skills and knowledge."

Al Darmaki says the program was beneficial to him and can benefit students seeking to broaden their global horizons. "It is a good program for students who plan to work with governments or organizations in different places in the world," Al Darmaki says. "The program will help students who will visit other countries gain a well-rounded perspective."

The program's first two graduates plan to apply their degrees almost immediately. Al Darmaki will look for a job in his native United Arab Emirates, and Jocic, who works for the State Department, awaits his next assignment to Ljubljana, Slovenia.



After graduating with his MA in 2010, Milan Jocic (above) took a position working for the United States Mission to the United Nations and is now awaiting his next assignment to Slovenia with the State Department.

**"It is a good program for students who plan to work with governments or organizations in different places in the world."**

— Eid Al Darmaki, winter 2010 graduate of global affairs master's program



## Research Assistantships

This year, Global Affairs awarded seven undergraduate student research assistantships worth \$1,000 each. Students receiving these awards work directly with a faculty member in the program on his or her research. These students presented their work at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences annual undergraduate research symposium in April.



## Thanks to Donor David Ramadan

This past fall, David Ramadan, the newest member of Mason's Board of Visitors, donated \$2,500 to the Global Affairs program. Ramadan, a global business executive, came to speak to our students about

the importance of being a global citizen in today's society and how that will help with a future career.

## Make a Donation

To continue our growth and development, our program relies on the support of our alumni. Please consider making a donation of any amount to be used toward student awards or scholarships for study abroad. Every gift, no matter its size, makes a difference in a student's life. Gifts can be made online at [www.gmu.edu/depts/development](http://www.gmu.edu/depts/development) or by sending a check to

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